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“WAR TO STOP WAR”

EMERGENCY COMPULSORY SERVICE IN AMERICA TO CRUSH THE SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY SERVICE FOR ALL CHILDREN OF MEN EVERYWHERE

BY JOHN SHARP WILLIAMS,
United States Senator from Mississippi.

We find ourselves as a nation in a very paradoxical sort of situation. In giving the reasons for standing where we are, we must indulge in phrases that seemingly contradict themselves. We are carrying on war with the hope of putting an end to war. We are using the ordinary method of settling international quarrels—war—with the hope that by indulging ourselves in this one hideous thing, once more, we may avoid in the future the recurrence of other hideous things like it. Then we are resorting to compulsory universal service in an emergency for the purpose, if we can, of freeing the world of the dogma and burden and weight and folly and idiocy of universal military service all over the world, with the hope that after the potency of this great republic has been added to the power of those in Europe who are fighting for civilization and liberty and freedom and the ordinary usages of civilized society, that there will be no need—here, or there, or anywhere—for universal compulsory service. We do this with the idea in our heads that we are going to enforce upon all the nations of this world, whether they will or not, that they shall not keep their populations in armed camps, threatening the peace of the other nations of the world and forcing them to imitate their example.

I have been a peace fanatic—am yet. I think that war when it is not insanity is idiocy. There is no excuse for it, and there ought to be somehow, somewhere, a court with force behind it that can say to the lawbreaking nations,

The first one of you who dares make war upon another civilized power without having first proposed to leave the question in controversy to an impartial tribunal for settlement, is thrown thereby outside of the pale of international law—is for the nonce to be treated as a non-civilized power—a barbarian power—and readmitted into the pale of civilization only when you repent, not by word, but

by deeds, for the sin against all mankind which you have committed. For the time being of your international lawlessness, at any rate, you become not the enemy of the country against which you are waging war, but the enemy of mankind, and all civilized power representing mankind will by force teach you that lesson any time it shall be necessary.

I don't care what you call it, a "concert of the world powers," or as I like to call it, "an amphictyonic council of the civilized world." Whatever it may be called, mankind must learn in international quarrels what they have learned in individual quarrels among civilized people in any given country, that is, that the league is backed with sufficient power just as a court to settle personal disputes. If the quarrel should be improperly decided, then even that is better than that every man should take his quarrel into his own hands and settle the controversy by the fist of the strongest or the wit of the cunningest.

Of course, this plan is not going to stop all war. There are wars founded upon deep differences of traditions and institutional policies, that may come anyhow. Most of them, however, are founded upon other things, like this war, for example, that ought by all means to have been avoided. Who pretends that Austria really made war upon Serbia because a Serbian by blood but an Austrian by nationality—half crazy—assassinated a grand duke and his wife? Who believes it? Who believes that if the proposition made to her to leave the question to the concert of Europe or to leave it to The Hague or to leave it to an impartial tribunal, had been accepted, there would have been any war at all? Who is there that does not know that the real cause of the war was the determination to open up for the Teutonic powers the line from Berlin to Bagdad by way of Belgrade and Salonica so that there might be an open way through Serbia for the Central Teutonic powers? Who does not know that all this talk about a "place in the sun" for Germany was folly and pretense? There was plenty of place in the sun. That the real God's truth was that Germany was increasing her population by immigration every year more than it was being decreased by emigration and that there were no "pent-up populations" "without room for their energies?"

So much for that. I am in favor of compulsory service in war time. I am opposed to it in peace time. But there is very little use of debating right now about having or not having that system in peace time, because it depends upon how this war is going to

result, as to what is going to become, at its end, of the system. If Germany wins this war, we will have to keep up universal military service indefinitely, because Belgium will become a part of her empire, France will be a vassal state whose international relations will be controlled by the German ambassador at Paris; Holland will be a vassal state. Denmark, with her hands in the lion's mouth, will be another. All the seacoast of the North Sea and the English Channel will be subject to her power. All the shipbuilding industries, rivers and harbors and naval yards of those countries will be hers, and "the master of the land" will proceed to become "the mistress of the sea." She and her allies are pretty nearly withstanding all Europe now, even with the miraculous seapower of England cast into the balance against them. And without our aid she would have to go down, and if England went down, our time would come now.

If Germany wins, we will have to keep up this miserable thing forever. No, not forever but until we and England only or perhaps we alone, under God's grace, can whip it. If we win, not only here but all over the civilized world, we can say that a nation shall be allowed to keep a standing army in times of peace with so many men in it, the same number for each nation—great or small—so that the small power can't be taken unawares and ridden over. Even that will not deprive the great powers with the great populations and resources of their natural advantages, because in addition to the troops in the field, which will be about all that the small powers can maintain, the great powers will have behind them their immense populations and their immense financial resources and every national advantage which they can conserve and in need summon and mobilize.

We are in the war now. We didn't want to go into it. We submitted to being kicked. We submitted to having written notice served upon us that we were going to be kicked again. Then we said, "We don't believe the Kaiser really means to do it and we will wait for the third kick." Then the Algonquin went down and three more American ships—four kicks. Now we are in it.

There are some things in this world that men must fight for. War is idiocy when it is not insanity. It is a perfectly hideous thing for men to be shooting one another, widowing the women, orphaning the children, destroying the churches and the uni-

versities and the libraries, making to crumble in one short year the accumulations of mankind for a hundred years; but there are some things in the world worse than that, and one of them is for a great people to submit indefinitely to humiliation until it loses its own self-respect and by thinking itself contemptible, becomes contemptible.

"Beware of entrance into a quarrel, but being in it, bear thyself that thy opposite may beware of thee." We are going to do that. I don't say I think we are, I say we are. I know this people. Whatsoever must be borne in order that this struggle may be carried to a successful issue and that world militarism may be brought to its knees, begging for mercy and agreeing to do justice in the future, we shall bear. Whatsoever it shall cost in order that that issue may be accomplished, we shall pay it; and whatsoever must be endured to prevent the possibility of the recurrence of the hideous spectacle to which we shall put an end by our victory, that we shall endure. And in doing these things, I think we will find that all sections and parts of this country will hang together. We had better do it, as Benjamin Franklin said, unless we want to hang separately.

And so it is with the civilized powers of the world in the face of this great military idealism. People who have ceased, without knowing it, the worship of Christ and have gone back to worshipping Thor and Odin—the gods of the Goths and Vandals; people who, or whose rulers, rather, not they, have come to the deliberate conviction, after study and philosophizing under teachers in universities, under statesmen like Bismarck, under military leaders like Bernhardt, that a state is bound by no moral law and that the interest of a state must constitute the state's right; in other words, that in international law, might is right and that the necessity of the state overcomes all moral considerations of every description, must have their sanity restored. This strange, curious form of insanity makes a state a separate entity of some sort, as if God had created cows and horses and men and then created something which He called a state; and this state-worship is more or less bound up with the idea that the man who hereditarily governs the state really does "rule by divine right"; that the state exists by divine right and that God created the state forgetful of the fact that after all, men created every state or else some one man, by superior

power and conquest, created it. What idiocy in the face of history! The idiocy of putting the creature before the creator of it!

A man not long ago wrote to me: "You Americans don't seem to understand the German idea of the state. You think of it not as a separate thing with a separate code of its own, but you think of it as you do of an individual." I wrote to him that as far as I was concerned, I was guilty; that I had never conceived of any government tolerable to man that wasn't founded upon the fact that men created it and that men had created it for the protection of their lives and liberties and civilization; and if any government didn't do that, men ought to tear it down, no matter what the name of it was, monarchy, empire or republic.

He thought that the state was an independent entity, and I said I regarded it as a creature. I regard the men and the women and the children as the things to be taken care of, and the state is there only for that purpose. I said, "You seem to think that William the Kaiser has been ordained of God to govern you, and you seem to think as a perfectly logical conclusion that the government which governs anybody is ordained of God to do whatever it pleases."

I read this recently, which you would think was written right now in America:

We are fighting for that which we love, whatever we call it. It is the right, but it is something even more than the right: for our lives, for the liberty of western Europe, for the possibility of peace and friendship between nations, for something which we should rather die than lose; and lose it we shall unless we can beat the Germans. Yet I have met scarcely a single person who seems to hate the Germans. We abominate their dishonest government, their unscrupulous and arrogant diplomacy, the whole spirit of blood and iron ambition which seems to have spread from Prussia through a great part of the nation—but not the people in general.

That is true with us today, isn't it? I haven't found in all America, one single man, though there may be some, that had in his heart one iota of hatred for the German people today. There is none that desires to avenge something, although we can hear the groans and the dying gurgles of the men and women and children who died from the *Lusitania*; yet with all that, there is none of that spirit of hatred that generally carries a people into a war. And God grant that there may be none, because when this war is

over we want to have a "just and durable peace," because a peace dictated by victors in a spirit of hatred is never just and is seldom durable.

We don't want to "crush Germany"—God forbid. We want to crush the system under which Germany is now laboring, and laboring under which, she has become a menace to the civilized world. If I could dictate the terms of peace tomorrow, I would say

Let Alsace-Lorraine go. Let Schleswig-Holstein go. Austria, let Bosnia form a government with her own Serbian kindred. Let Herzegovina go with her Montenegro kinspeople. Turn the Roumanians in Transylvania loose. Free Bohemia from Hapsburg rule. Reign over the Magyars if they wish that you should. Russia, Austria and Prussia, all three, let Poland be reëstablished once more as an independent power upon the surface of this globe, with rights of citizenship. Germany, let Belgium go. Turn Luxemburg loose if she wants to be. If there is any doubt about the will of the people in any of these countries, let them decide whether they want to go with you or go back to their kin.

But I wouldn't crush Germany. On the contrary, I would make Germany stronger than she is now. The German population of upper Austria and of lower Austria and of the Tyrol and of Salzburg and of any other province outside of the German Empire, I would add to the German Empire and make it stronger than it is today, and I would base nationality on the commonness of language, because you can't have a durable peace unless that is the case. Now that might result in crushing the House of Hapsburg, and it would do it very effectively, but it wouldn't crush the German people.

Says another, not an American:

We seek no territory, no aggrandizement, no revenge. We only want to be safe from the recurrence of this present horror. We want permanent peace for Europe and freedom for each nation. Crushing Germany would do no good. It would point straight towards a war of revenge. It is not Germany, it is a system that needs crushing. It is not that we happen to be sick of this particular war; it is that we mean, if we can, to extirpate war out of the normal possibilities of civilized life, as we have extirpated leprosy and typhus. We hate war so much that we shall carry it on in order to abolish it.

First of all, we want no revenge, no deliberate humiliation of any enemy, no picking and stealing of money or territory; next, we want a drastic resettlement of all those burning problems which carry in them the seeds of European War, especially the problem of territory. Many of the details will be very difficult, some may prove insoluble, but in general, we must try to arrange, even at considerable cost, that territory goes with nationality. And shall we try again to

achieve Castlereagh's and Alexander's ideal of a permanent concert, pledged to make collective war upon the peace-breaker? Surely we must.

Of course, all these hopes may be shattered and made ridiculous before the settlement comes. They would be shattered, probably, by a German victory, not because Germans are wicked but because a German victory at the present time would mean a victory for blood and iron. To prevent the first of these perils is the work of our armies and navies; to prevent the second should be the work of all thoughtful non-combatants. It may be a difficult task, but at least it is not hideous, though some of the work that we must do in order to accomplish it may be; so hideous, indeed, that at times it seems strange that we can carry it out at all—this war of civilized men against civilized men, against our intellectual teachers and compeers, our brothers in art and science and healing medicine, and so large a part of all that makes life beautiful. We must fight our hardest, indomitably, gallantly, even joyously, forgetting all else while we have to fight. When the fight is over, we must remember the phrase, "Never again!"

"Never again! Somebody advised not long ago that those words should be carried upon the kit-bag of every English sailor and upon the knapsack of every English soldier." "Never again" I say, a thing like this for us or for our brethren elsewhere. Our brethren, because all the children of God are brethren, whether they be Germans or Russians or French or Belgians or Americans. We are fighting to reëstablish the brotherhood of man and to crush forever the doctrine that anybody has the right, for the sake of making himself or his nation more powerful than other people, to ride, rough-shod over men and women and children as Germany did in Belgium without even herself contending that they had even in the slightest degree provoked enmity by any act or word or intent, and then afterwards killed the civil population because they sympathized with their own brethren and their own land and because they had dared, as a little people, rather to die free than to live slaves.

So I say as this author says about the British soldier going out with "Never again" inscribed upon his knapsack,—I want every American who goes forth to go with that on his knapsack, and if he can't put it upon his knapsack, put in his heart at any rate: "Never again."

It means a great deal, because it furthermore means that you are so resolutely determined that this hideous thing shall never again occur that you have made up your mind you won't quit fighting now until you are sure that you can make it tolerably certain that it never again will occur.

Now, these words I quote are not my words. They are the words of Professor Gilbert Murray of Oxford University, pronounced in an address in 1914. He concludes by saying "One may well be thankful that the strongest of the neutral powers"—referring to these United States—"is guided by a leader so wise and upright and temperate as President Wilson."

A LEAGUE TO ENFORCE PEACE

BY WALTER L. FISHER,
Chicago.

The immediate cause that has involved the United States in war today is that our ships are being sunk and our people killed while they are lawfully engaged in peaceful commerce on the seas; but important as is the immediate protection of our national rights and of our people's lives against other nations who are engaged in war, this alone would not have drawn us into the war. We are at war because we believe there is a compelling necessity and a real opportunity "to make the world safe for democracy"; to end militarism as a political system; to destroy Prussianism as a national philosophy. We are at war, and our immediate task is to make war effectively. But if we cease for one moment to keep in mind the deep underlying purpose of our warfare, and the great object we hope and intend to accomplish by it, we shall weaken the very effectiveness of our warfare. We shall be of those who gain battles and yet lose a war. I agree entirely with the sentiment expressed by Senator Williams¹ with regard to that motto which should go upon the knapsack of the soldier, "Never again"; but unless the men and women of America who are not soldiers have that motto written in their hearts and express it in action, then indeed the sacrifice of the soldiers will have been in vain.

Two years ago Lord Grey uttered the profound truth that

Unless mankind learns from this war to avoid war the struggle will have been in vain. . . . Over humanity will loom the menace of destruction. If the world cannot organize against war, if war must go on . . . the resources and inventions of science will end by destroying the humanity they were meant to serve.

¹ See page 178.